



Town of Stonington

Quarterly Newsletter



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Feb-April 2023

There have been many positive happenings in Town thanks to the dedicated work of many of our Town staff, elected officials, volunteers and our extensive nonprofit and business community. We continue to welcome feedback on further potential enhancements and ideas. We are also always happy to set-up a time to connect in-person or on a call to discuss any existing projects, new ideas or areas of concern.

Thank you, Danielle Chesebrough, Stonington First Selectman

Dear Stonington Residents,

We are proud and grateful for all the time and effort put forth by so many people working to improve our community! So many positive aspects are thanks to the efforts of our staff at Town Hall, Human Services, the Transfer Station, Public Works, the Police Department, and Stonington Schools, as well as the work done by hundreds of volunteers who give their time and knowledge to our Boards and Commissions, as well as our local nonprofits.



Together, we have all been able to make so many positive contributions within the community. There have been challenging times for certain, but it is often through these moments that we are able to learn and move forward to address opportunities before us. Below we have captured a few highlights from February-April, across our community.



In partnership with Lt. Governor Susan Bysiewicz and Commissioner of the CT Department of Veterans Affairs Thomas J. Saadi, the Town of Stonington held a ceremony to honor and recognize all of our local **Vietnam-era Veterans**. We were honored to also be joined by Stonington resident Linda Schwartz, a former flight nurse in the Air Force and Veterans Affairs Commissioner, along with our state delegation. In other local news, the artwork has been etched onto the porcelain sides for the **Stonington Veterans Monument**, the foundation and concrete has been poured and landscape design is in the works. The ribbon cutting is scheduled for Flag Day.

The **Stonington Energy Fair** was held at Mystic Aquarium's Milne Center for Ocean Science and Conservation. The Fair was organized by the **Economic Development Commission and Climate Change Task Force**. The Energy Fair is another excellent example of how the Town of Stonington benefits from the dedication and hard work of its volunteers. This event offered residents and businesses a fun and educational opportunity to better understand the many options available to them when it comes to sustainable energy options.



In support of our **local fishing fleet**, the First Selectman worked in partnership with Congressman Courtney to secure \$900,000 in federal funding for infrastructure investment in the North Pier. We also got word that the State Bonding Commission approved an additional \$250,000 in funding to this effort thanks to a grant written by the First Selectman to the CT Port Authority last summer, with support from our state delegation. As part of this ongoing effort, the Economic Development Commission has launched an ongoing marketing effort aimed at increasing consumption of local fish! Visit www.stoningtonfresh.com to learn more.





Did you know that in addition to be delicious, Kelp also cleans water, and absorbs carbon and agricultural runoff nutrients like nitrogen and phosphorus?! **KELP Week** event at Mechanic Street Martina with Stonington Kelp Company, Yellow Farmhouse Education Center, and The Shipwright's Daughter, sharing how sugar kelp is harvested and consumed, along with its many environmental benefits! We were honored to be joined by the Lt. Governor Susan Bysiewicz, CT Commissioner of Agriculture and others to discuss ways to further enhance support for this sustainable industry. The celebration was part

of the third annual sugar kelp harvest celebration in southern New England, a 10-day program designed to mark the harvest at the end of April, promote partnerships with restaurants and raise awareness regarding the new and growing industry. As part of this effort, the Mystic Rotary Club has provided a grant to Yellow Farmhouse to enable the purchase, distribution and education of students in 15 high school culinary classrooms in eastern Connecticut. To learn more visit: www.stoningtonkelpco.com/



The Board of Selectman were honored to join the dedication of the **Craig Floyd Giving Garden at Coogan Farm**. In the nearly ten years since the founding of the Giving Garden, the Denison Pequotsepos Nature Center has donated more than 100,000 pounds of produce to the food insecure of New London County through the Gemma Moran Center. Executive Director Davnet Conway said of Floyd in her remarks, “Craig came to DPNC with a unique vision, to heal the earth while healing humans: physically through food – mentally through peaceful interactions with the soil – and spiritually through compassionate work.” As part of the dedication they announced the establishment of the Giving Garden Endowment Fund, and introduced Koralee Lawrence as the new Garden Manager. Rebecca and Jay Levy and their son, Cacique, from the Mashantucket Pequot Tribe performed a blessing on the land for the 2023 season. Members of the community wishing to contribute or get more involved can learn more [here](#).

Stonington High School's Empty Bowls event brought together members of the Board of Selectman, Police Department and schools. This community event raises awareness about food insecurity and fighting hunger. The bowls are made by students, staff and community members and funds are raised for the Pawcatuck Neighborhood Center and Coogan Farm Giving Garden.



Stonington Human Services and the **Department of Public Works** continue to work in partnership on enhancing the recreational opportunities at Spellman Park, including Disc Golf Course, new walking trails and clearing space for outdoor enjoyment. If you have been by recent- come and see their great work!



Thanks to the efforts of the EDC and SE CT Cultural Coalition, Stonington is on its way toward having two official **Cultural Districts**. Residents approved this new Commission at a Town Meeting. These districts offer a high concentration of cultural facilities and programs within walking distance and can help strengthen local economies, create an enhanced sense of place, and deepen local cultural capacity. At the same meeting, residents approved a new Housing Opportunities Commission. If you are interested in joining either, applications are accepted through May 17th.



Stonington Ambulance and Police Department, along with other **first responders** plunged into the cold waters to raise funds for the Mystic Aquarium.

Stonington High School brought together female leaders from different positions across our community, including Stonington schools, Always Home, Ocean Community Chamber, DPNC, Stonington Free Library and Town government, to speak with students as part of the VOICES program.



Permitting is underway for the **Mystic River Boathouse Park** (land purchased in 2016), and further grants are being pursued by the Town for the Living Shoreline, which is now fully designed. This is a major milestone in this project and we are so appreciative to the many, past and present, volunteers, staff and officials who have worked to make get us to this point. There is still more work to be done, but the project is moving into an important new phase. Stay tuned for more updates.

Concept plans for the **'Circus Lot'**, a 5.6-acre waterfront lot along the Pawcatuck River, were shared with the community and work is underway to secure funding to make this park a reality. Conversation continues with Westerly to outline the path for Stonington to purchase this land back, and further due diligence has been completed. This project is still in its very early days, but we are excited for its potential and the warm welcome it has received so far from the community.





We are so grateful to all who came together to create this local opportunity for Stonington families. **Child and Family Agency** of Southeastern CT celebrated the opening of its newest Outpatient Behavioral Health Clinic at 118 South Broad Street. They are taking new clients by appointment, or they also offer ‘Open Access Hours’ 9-11am on Wednesdays.

SHS students went to over 30 locations to volunteer, and we are so grateful to all involved, especially Ann-Marie Crowley Houle for organizing this tremendous undertaking! In honor of Arbor Day, the **Stonington Beautification Committee** also partnered with students to plant over 50 trees, with support from members of our DPW crew!



Thank you to everyone involved in **Stonington Publics School's Witness Stone Project**, the 8th grade class and all involved should be commended for their dedication uncovering the important life of Cato Cuffs, an enslaved Stonington man who fought for his freedom.



The **Mystic Chamber of Commerce** brought together the communities of Groton and Stonington, to share community-wide updates. Team Stonington was excited to share all the great working within our schools and across our town.

The community came together at the end of April to share their thanks and wish **Borough Warden Jeff Callahan a wonderful retirement!**



Our Town Engineer and DPW have been busy with a range of projects. One example, is a project on Lincoln & Washington streets. This operation is a necessary investment to enhance both **the stormwater drainage system** and preserve the life span of the roadway prior to repaving efforts. Thank you to the team for their excellent work!



Here you can see the "geotextile" base being installed to support the new **Salt Shed** walls and paving structure. This operation represents an activity necessary to stabilize the ground to support the anticipated 1,100 Tons of salt and heavy machinery to dispense product into Town vehicles. You can see ongoing progress when you drive by our Public Works facility.

Human Services has many areas of work, including children and families; senior; social services; and recreation. Be sure to check out their Rec Desk and social media pages for information on a range of programs they offer residents! Also, on Saturday May 6th from 11am-1pm they are hosting **Spring Fest**. You can learn more about the great work they do, along with many other nonprofits in the community. Plus, they will have a rock wall, crafts, touch-a-truck, snacks and more!



We hope you'll join us...

Something for ALL ages!

Connect with friends, neighbors, first responders, non-profits, civic groups & service providers. Car seat checks; plant sale; rock wall; tons of CRAFTS for kids (sand art, pinwheels, etc); inflatables; touch-a-truck and so much more!

Participating Organizations:
 Stonington Police Department;
 Mystic Fire Department;
 Wequetequock Fire Department;
 Westerly Ambulance Corps;
 Stonington Beautification Committee; Mystic & Noank Library; Pawcatuck Neighborhood Center; Clean Up Sound & Harbors (CUSH); TVCCA; Yellow Farmhouse; Eastern CT Transportation Consortium (ECTC); Stonington Free Library; Stonington Prevention Council

STONINGTON HUMAN SERVICES
 PLAN • PROVIDE • PROTECT

ALL activities FREE! Food and beverages available for purchase.



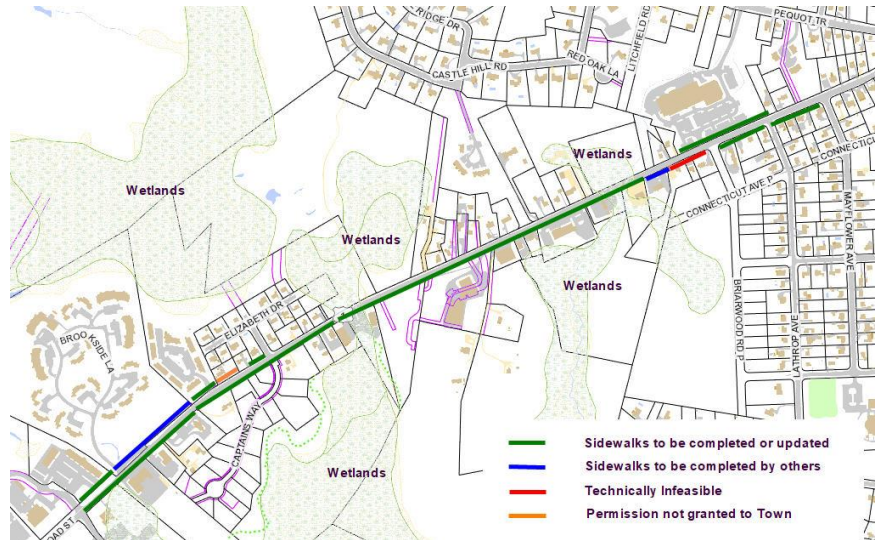
The weather is FINALLY warm enough to get some color down on the courts 🎾🎾🎾 It's not ready yet but it won't be long before we can get back on our NEW **Tennis & Pickleball** courts. [#StoningtonRec](#) [#tennis](#) [#pickleball](#)



The launch of Stonington's new **food waste program** has been a tremendous success thanks to the fantastic **Solid Waste** team and residents of this wonderful community. Since starting in late January, we have diverted over 52 tons of food waste; bringing it to a facility that turns it into renewable energy and compost. On average we are collecting over 1,000 green bags a week and hope to see that number continue to grow. Interested in learning more? Join our Director of Recycling and Solid Waste, Jill Senior at the La Grua Center on May 17th at 5pm. Jill will share how Stonington's innovative waste collection has made us the town with the lowest per capita rate of waste in the State. Stay tuned for more exciting news coming in a few weeks (*hint- we plan to help you get more plastic out of your yellow bags!*).

The long-awaited **Route One sidewalk project** is

anticipated to begin in mid-June and be completed by early Fall! The construction will begin at the Spellman Park/Route One intersection and will move towards Mayflower Avenue. We thank all our residents who have engaged with us over the years on this project. To-date, over twenty easements have been negotiated, across private property to allow for the construction and future maintenance of the sidewalk. BL Companies assisted with civil engineering work to design the plans according to the specifications of both the Connecticut Department of Transportation, the Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development and the Federal Americans with Disabilities Act Standards. The project has been reviewed by the Department of Transportation and the Department of Economic and Community Development. The project was publicly bid this winter and was awarded on February 22, 2023 to Olmstead Contracting LLC. A special thank you to Susan Cullen, Director of Economic and Community Development, for her three years of work on this important town project.



For more updates on Economic and Community efforts across the community check out <https://stonington1649.com/>

Thank you, Stonington!